peared in the Indian Express dated 26th December, 1996 under the caption "FCI bungled, failed to transport wheat";

(b) if so, whether any action has been taken to look into this bungling on the part of the FCI and action taken against the officials guilty thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The report was looked into and found without substance. Its main thrust that wheat stocks had not moved from Punjab and Haryana to the deficit States like West Bengal, Maharashtra and Kerala and as a result, the PDS commitments had not been met, was found incorrect. During 1996, 97.72 lakh tonnes of wheat was moved ex. North compared to 74.86 lakh tonnes in 1995, which was 30.5% higher. The other contention that concessional PDS rates of wheat had benefited traders and millers cartels, is also. untrue. No evidence of building by FCI officials was found.

(c) Question does not arise.

Wheat import and its impact on Domestic Market

185. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat imported by the Government since the beginning of the year 1997;

(b) the rate at which the contracted wheat has been imported or being imported vis-a-vis the prices in the international market;

(c) the total expenditure (in foreign exchange) to be incurred by Government on the wheat imports; and

(d) the likely impact of import on the wheat prices in the domestic market and its overall impact on the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Government has decided to import upto 2 million tonnes of wheat to augment its availability in the domestic market. In pursuance of the decision the State Trading Corporation of India has so far contracted for import of 16.75 lakh tonnes of wheat at the rates indicated below:—

Country	Contracted price in US $ PMT	Prices quoted in International market (US $ PMT)
Australia	148—156 (FOB)	199.50—205.00 (FOB)
Canada	152.50 (FOB)	191.00 (FOB)
Argentina	173.00 (C&F)	144.00 (FOB)

The quantity of wheat that has already arrived is 4.36 lakh M.T. upto 20.2.97.

(c) and (d) The total foreign exchange expenditure on the quantity contracted so far is provisionally estimated at approx. US $ 290 Million.

The imported wheat stocks are expected to have a salutary effect in containing the open market prices of wheat.

खाद्यान्नों पर दी जाने वाली राजसहायता में निरन्तर वृद्धि

186. **श्री राम जेठमलानी:** क्या खाद्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या गत वर्षों के दौरान खाद्यान्नों पर दी जाने वाली राजसहायता में निरन्तर वृद्धि हुई है;